

Senator Harry Reid A Report to Nevadans

Autumn 2004

Fighting for Affordable Health Care

Dear Friend,

As a native of Searchlight and the son of a hardrock miner, I have worked hard to uphold Nevada values in the U.S. Senate. I wouldn't enjoy the privilege of serving our great state without a lot of help from good people along the way - like the late Governor O'Callaghan, who helped me find a job as a Capitol Police Officer so I could support my family while attending law school. These experiences shaped the way I approach my work in the Senate and strengthened my commitment to protect our precious freedom, provide opportunities for all Nevadans, and improve our quality of life.



I supported the Do-Not-Call Implementation Act, which will help Nevadans put an end to dreaded dinner-time telemarketing calls. If you register with the National Do Not Call Registry, you will substantially limit the number of telemarketing calls you receive. When the Registry went into effect, most telemarketers were required to remove numbers on the registry from their call lists within three months or possibly be subject to a fine of up to \$11,000.

Call: 1-888-382-1222
www.donotcall.gov

I want to make better health care available to every Nevadan by cutting costs, improving quality, and expanding access.

Since the Medicare prescription drug bill passed last December, I have redoubled my fight to give seniors the drug coverage they really need, to cut prescription drug costs, and to strengthen Medicare. I think Americans should have the right to realize the cost savings from safe, imported prescription drugs, and I believe Medicare should negotiate lower drug prices on behalf of America's 40 million seniors. I also am working to improve the new prescription drug card to ensure that discounts are passed along to seniors, rather than drug companies.

More than 300,000 Nevadans and 44 million Americans are living without health insurance - far too many. That is why I recently introduced a bill to provide a tax credit for small business health insurance costs. By helping small businesses meet the high costs of health insurance, we will take a big step toward expanding insurance coverage to more Nevada families.

I have also been fighting to improve Nevadans' cancer care. All corners of our state are affected terribly by cancer. We know about the tragedy of the cancer cluster affecting children near Fallon, even if we don't understand the cause. There is a great need for a leading edge cancer center conducting research and providing treatment for Nevadans so they don't have to travel far away for care. I have secured millions of dollars in federal funding to help create the Nevada Cancer Institute which will serve all Nevadans.

It is critical that doctors, not insurance companies, make medical decisions. That is why I support a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that would ensure that all Americans have timely access to the emergency care, specialists, clinical trials and the prescription medications they need. Patients must come before profits.

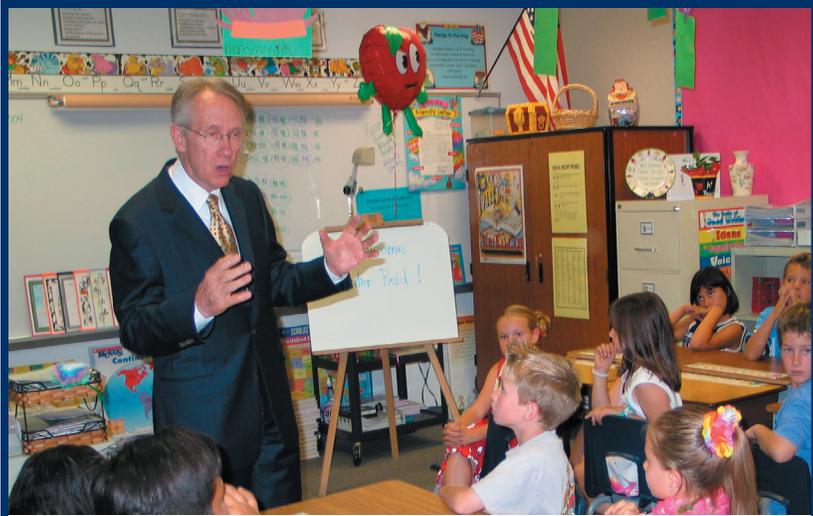


Senator Harry Reid speaks to residents at a Health Care, Education and Jobs Town Hall Meeting at the Dayton Senior Center

Safeguarding Education

Education is the key to the future, both for our children and our nation. My own life was transformed by education, and I appreciate the importance of giving every child in Nevada a quality education.

In 2002 I supported and the President signed a bipartisan education bill, which promised that no child in America would be left behind in our public schools. Unfortunately, the Administration has broken that promise by cutting millions of dollars from education programs. I remain committed to fulfilling the promise of the No Child Left Behind Act by providing the resources and support that our teachers and students need.



Senator Harry Reid speaks to students at Selma Bartlett Elementary School

I also am working to ensure that Nevada receives its fair share of federal funding, and I have introduced legislation with Senator Ensign that would bring more Head Start funding to our state. Head Start provides early childhood development services that prepare young children to succeed in school. Unfortunately, Head Start funds are currently allocated in a way that doesn't account for Nevada's high growth rate.

The soaring cost of college also concerns me. I have always supported the Perkins and Pell Grant programs, which provide financial assistance to college students. I will keep fighting to keep these doors of opportunity open so more of Nevada's young people can realize their dreams of attending college.

Building a Stronger Economy

One of my top priorities in the Senate is promoting economic prosperity in Nevada and the nation. I have always been a strong supporter of middle class tax cuts, including the child tax credit and eliminating the marriage penalty, that help working families. I also believe we should invest in creating good jobs, so every American who wants to work has the opportunity to do so.

As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations and the Environment and Public Works Committees, I have fought for infrastructure investments that improve our quality of life and create thousands of new jobs. These projects include the Hoover Dam Bypass, the Las Vegas Monorail, and improvements at the Reno-Tahoe Airport. I also have been working on a new, bipartisan six-year transportation bill that will provide millions of dollars in new federal funds to relieve traffic congestion and boost Nevada's economy.

Some of Senator Reid's Recent Major Rural Nevada Projects (Funding to Date)

- Hoover Dam Bypass: \$42 million
- Tropicana/Flamingo Flood Control Project: \$176 million
- Lake Tahoe Wetlands Restoration: \$7 million
- Rural Nevada Water and Sewer Projects: \$32 million
- Water Recycling Projects: \$5 million
- Las Vegas Monorail Project: \$19.6 million
- Reno-Tahoe Airport Improvements: \$23.6 million
- Reno Bus Transfer and Highway Projects: \$16.7 million

Another way to strengthen our economy is to make sure hard-working Nevadans receive fair wages. I support efforts to increase the minimum wage, which has remained stagnant for the past seven years, and I also have opposed the Administration's efforts to take away the right of American workers to receive overtime pay. I favor legislation that would guarantee the right of workers to receive extra pay for extra work - just as they have for decades.

Improving the tax system will also bolster our economy, which is why I have been a champion of taxpayer rights throughout my career. In fact, I gave my first speech in the Senate on this very issue,

and I have worked to enact a Taxpayer Bill of Rights and other measures that would strengthen the rights of taxpayers and make IRS bureaucrats more accountable to the people who pay their salaries.

Securing Our Nation from Danger

Nevada has long played a key role in defending our nation. The terrorist attacks of September 11 highlighted our nation's vulnerability in a devastating way, and I have been working hard since then to make Nevada and the nation more secure.



Senator Harry Reid with Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and General John Gordon, Homeland Security Advisor at the National Center for Combating Terrorism, Nevada Test Site.

After September 11, I hosted a bipartisan counter-terrorism summit that focused on our nation's frontline defenders: our firefighters, police, medical personnel, and other first responders. I also helped establish the National Center for Combating Terrorism at the Nevada Test Site to better train America's counter-terrorism personnel and first responders. Since then I have secured more than \$100 million for the Center to train nearly 10,000 first responders.

I have fought to keep our skies safe by improving security at Nevada's airports.

Last year the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) proposed cutting 150 security screeners from McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas. This would have compromised security and damaged Nevada's tourism industry, and I convinced the TSA that the positions should not be cut. Since then, I have worked with the TSA and Senator Ensign to add more than 300 additional screeners to meet McCarran's future needs.

Battling the Proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Dump

Led by the Bush Administration's Department of Energy, the proposed Yucca Mountain Project would force Nevadans to store 77,000 tons of the nation's nuclear waste about one hour from the homes and businesses of the Las Vegas valley. Transporting the waste across the country to Yucca Mountain would put Nevadans and millions of Americans at risk.

I have fought this project, and will continue to fight it, for one simple reason: because it threatens the health and safety of Nevadans.

No matter what anybody says, completion of this project is not inevitable. In fact, Nevada recently won a major victory in the fight against Yucca Mountain.

On July 9, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that a critical standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency for the site would not protect public health and safety. The federal court acknowledged that the Administration ignored the scientific recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences - recommendations that it was required by law to follow. This court decision throws a huge roadblock in front of the Administration's effort to move forward on Yucca Mountain.

Appeals of this important ruling are possible, and the fight to stop Yucca once and for all will continue. But this court case, combined with several other significant problems with the project, reinforces my belief that the project will never be completed. In the meantime, I will continue to use my position as a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee to slash funding for Yucca Mountain.

Conserving Nevada's Natural Heritage

From the Ruby Mountains to the pristine blue waters of Lake Tahoe to the Mojave Desert of southern Nevada, our state enjoys a rich natural heritage. Nevada's natural splendor not only provides tremendous recreational opportunities for Nevadans but also boosts our economy by attracting tourists to our state.

For example, Lake Tahoe is among Nevada's most beautiful treasures. Surrounded by alpine forests, it is home to bald eagles, coyotes, and the cutthroat trout. Visitors to Lake Tahoe can hike, ski, or fish in a setting that is unmatched anywhere - and we owe it to our grandchildren to give them the same opportunity. Senator Ensign and I are working together to protect this priceless

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resource, and we secured \$50 million last year to restore Lake Tahoe to its fabled clarity.

Several years ago, I also helped establish the Nevada Arid Rangelands Initiative through the University of Nevada, Reno, to control invasive species and weeds in Nevada. UNR has become a leader in the West in addressing the issues affecting our rangelands, helping ensure the environmental and economic health of many communities throughout the state.

I also have worked to protect other areas in Nevada, such as Great Basin National Park, the Ruby Mountains, Red Rock Canyon, Sloan Canyon and Lake Mead. While we have made much progress, I remain strongly committed to preserving and protecting Nevada's natural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations.



Senator Reid and Senator Ensign at the Lake Tahoe Forum.

Putting Nevadans First

Congress continues to make critical decisions that will affect Nevadans. You have the power to influence this debate. I look forward to hearing your thoughts about issues facing Nevadans and all Americans.

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Please visit my website at <http://reid.senate.gov> and sign up to receive regular e-mail updates.

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